

Learning Together

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News from the
Integrated Education Fund



Keisha Fee and Jamie Nesbitt of Mallusk IPS with (l-r) Mike Nesbitt MLA (UUP), Colin McGrath MLA (SDLP), Kellie Armstrong MLA (APNI), Richard Lemon (IEF Board of Directors) and Mervyn Storey MLA (DUP)

Alternative route for education revealed

Children have handed Stormont politicians a radical plan for the future of the NI education system. Keisha Fee and Jamie Nesbitt, from Mallusk Integrated Primary School, presented the IEF's *Alternative Manifesto* to MLAs on 16 April at Parliament Buildings.

IEF director Richard Lemon told guests at the launch

“Northern Ireland currently supports an effectively segregated education system. This is dependent on duplicated resources and unwieldy bureaucracy at a time of severe budget pressures. We want to see children, rather than institutions, at the heart of policy.”

The IEF *Alternative Manifesto* is a ‘road-map’ of achievable steps to move us away from the current, divisive nature of our education system. Key areas include the reform of teacher training, the extension of fair employment legislation to the recruitment of teachers and the introduction of a single model of governance for all schools.

The event was kindly sponsored by Alliance MLA Chris Lyttle who said

“If we are to have a society where everyone is respected, we need to start by respecting parents’ wishes to have their children educated together in an integrated ethos. The education of our children together is a vital step towards building the united community the vast majority of people in Northern Ireland wish to see.”

Mike Nesbitt MLA (UUP) supported the launch and told the audience

“Mixing children from age four would provide a virtual inoculation against sectarian thoughts. As we approach Northern Ireland’s centenary, I can think of no finer way to enter the next hundred years than with a commitment to educating all our children together.”

At the launch, the DUP’s Peter Weir, former Education Minister, acknowledged that it was time to change “antiquated” aspects of the system, such as schools being exempt from fair employment legislation.

Welcoming the publication, Sinn Fein’s education spokesperson Karen Mullan said

“Education is key to achieving a genuinely reconciled society and this *Alternative Manifesto* is an important contribution to the debate as to how we shape our schools system and develop our educational policy together for the benefit of children and the benefit of society.”

<https://www.ief.org.uk/resources/publications/>



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EDUCATION FUND

Official guide says *Integration Works*

The Department of Education has issued new guidance for schools on becoming formally integrated. Integration is available to nearly every school in Northern Ireland, and the official process of becoming integrated is termed “transformation”. The DE document, *Integration Works*, offers advice and support to schools considering this option.

Jason Milligan, Principal of one of the most recently transformed schools, Killyleagh IPS, joined Derek Baker of the DE and Tina Merron, CEO of the IEF, to launch the booklet. Tina commented

“We’re delighted to see schools being given more information and encouragement through the Integration Works document, which acknowledges the benefits of integrated education and clarifies the steps a school community takes to become officially integrated.

The IEF and NICIE offer additional support and practical help to schools exploring transformation. We look forward to assisting more transforming schools in the future.”

Integration Works tells school leaders that “As children and young people prepare to live and work in a global, multicultural and pluralistic



Jason Milligan (Killyleagh IPS), Derek Baker (DE) and Tina Merron (IEF)



The Hazelwood IC choir sings at the Integration Works conference

society, the benefits of educating them together are becoming increasingly recognised.”

Roisin Marshall, NICIE Chief Executive, also welcomed the document, adding

“Integrated education is the biggest, most successful and sustainable community relations project in Northern Ireland with the biggest impact. Ask anyone who has been involved.”

The government has a statutory duty to encourage and facilitate the development of integrated education and, through the Integration Works guidance, the Department of Education aims to “refresh and reinvigorate the transformation process...providing unique opportunities to enhance the educational experiences of children and young people.”

The DE sent out a hard copy of *Integration Works* to every eligible school when the term began in January this year.

NICIE and the IEF collaborated to host an ‘Integration Works’ conference on 07 March at Crumlin Road Gaol. This gave interested schools and parents the opportunity to explore the idea of transformation to integrated status in more depth.

Twenty non-integrated schools (including five nursery schools) were represented at the conference and they were joined by delegates from transformed schools: Crumlin Integrated College; Crumlin Integrated Primary; Cliftonville Integrated Primary; and Killyleagh Integrated Primary, who were all there to share their experiences.

Out and about to share the news

The ‘Integrate My School’ advert - featuring our supporter Liam Neeson - has been showing in cinemas around Northern Ireland during February and March. The IEF and NICIE have supported this by visiting cinemas to offer further information to parents and to let them know about the possibility of schools becoming officially integrated.

We have been really pleased by the positive response from people we’ve met and we’re looking forward to meeting more families at festivals and events over the summer. These include the Balmoral Show in Lisburn during May, the Ballymoney Show in June, Castlewellan Show and Sunflowerfest in July, the Belfast Mela in August and Culture Night Belfast in September – and many more! Look out for the ‘Integrate My School’ stand and come and say hello.

Register your support for your school to explore transformation to integrated status at: www.integratemySchool.com



Jill Caskey (IEF) and Lynn Johnston (NICIE) spreading the word

Poll shows NI parents want education reform

A survey commissioned by the IEF found evidence of the impact of school budget cuts around NI – and also found that parents would support reform of the education system to ease the pressures. It emerged that educational standards in good facilities were priorities for parents in choosing a school, as well as proximity to home or good transport links.

An NI-wide poll was carried out by independent company LucidTalk in February. Parents were asked “What evidence, if any, have you seen at your child/ren’s school that there are financial pressures?” Responses included parents having to supply basic stationery items, pupils being sent home early and teachers being made redundant. In some cases parents are volunteer replacements for teaching assistants and many say special needs provision has been cut.

Most of the 1520 people responding would support structural changes to the education system: 78% said they would support

cross-community mergers of schools to tackle over-capacity and use resources better. And the vast majority want to see an independent review of the education system, to identify what improvements are needed.

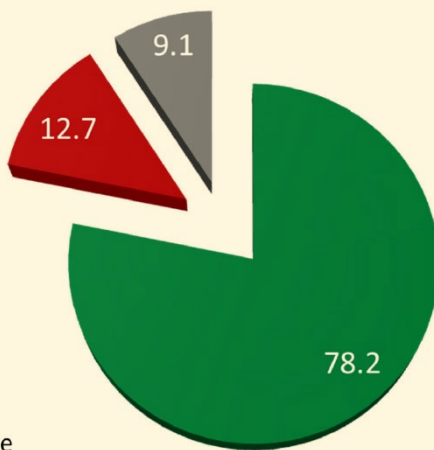
The poll was carried out online and by telephone from 15 to 23 February 2018. The sample results were balanced by gender, age-group, area of residence, and community background, in order to be demographically representative of Northern Ireland.

You can read more at www.ief.org.uk/resources

QUESTION 9:

Would you support cross-community mergers of schools to rationalise the education system and to save money?

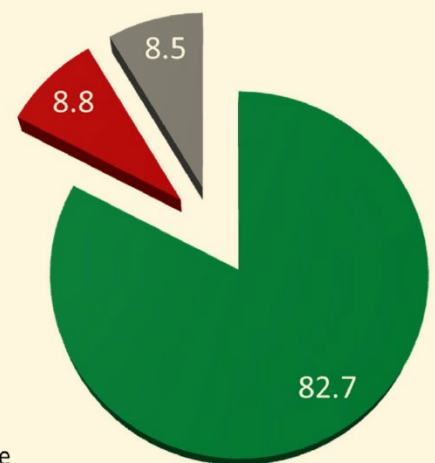
- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Not Sure



QUESTION 10:

Should there be an independent, root and branch review of the way that education is planned and delivered in Northern Ireland?

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know/Not Sure



Editorial



Tina Merron CEO IEF

This month saw the 20th anniversary of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement. That document includes a pledge to support integrated education – yet only 65 schools offer parents the opportunity to choose integration for their family.

The current political crisis means that this anniversary comes at a particularly challenging time and, given the financial situation in schools, the IEF wanted to know the public’s views on the education system and on possible improvement. The Fund commissioned a poll by independent company LucidTalk, who accessed their panel of 10,000 + members to create a picture of opinion across NI.

One thing which leaps out is the serious impact of budget cuts. However, the budget could be used more effectively if it were spread less thinly. If school provision were reviewed and reformed, we could spend what we have where it is most needed: in schools.

For most parents, it emerged that the standard of education offered is their priority when choosing a school. This is closely followed in importance by the quality of the buildings and the distance from home. Parents want to see good sports and cultural provision and extra help to meet special needs - and all these come a long way above considerations of ethos or management. Meanwhile, the assumption that it is important to sustain several

sectors is expensive: we are all paying for duplication of provision (resulting in thousands of empty school places) and for duplication of management bodies with claims on the Department of Education’s funds.

Streamlining provision on a cross-community basis could result in a pattern of education delivery where everyone feels a sense of both belonging and ownership regarding their local school. And there is evidence in the poll that parents would accept this: there is overwhelming support – almost 80% - for merging schools on cross-community lines to make the system more efficient.

The recent Department of Finance budget briefing acknowledged the need for radical changes – “transformation” – to the education system. But there is no plan in place for achieving this. So it is not surprising that when we put the question “Should there be an independent, root-and-branch review of the way that education is planned and delivered in NI...?” 90% of those expressing an opinion said “Yes”.

More integrated places from pre-school to A-level

Local children joined the IEF, NICIE and political representatives to celebrate the opening of Cuan Kids Community Pre-school, with part-time places for 26 children, at Portaferry IPS on 08 November last year. The IEF is proud to support the pre-school, providing funds for accommodation and to help with first-year running costs, thanks to donors the Magheramorne Foundation and Gordon Holmes.



Baroness May Blood, Principal Jason Milligan and nursery leader Hannah Cowan with nursery pupils at Killyleagh IPS

Killyleagh IPS officially opened its nursery unit on Friday 12 January in a specially refurbished area of the school. There are 26 full-time places in the nursery, which has been open to pupils since September 2017. Killyleagh Primary School became an officially integrated school in 2016 after a ballot of parents showed overwhelming support for the change.

The announcement that Drumragh Integrated College in Omagh would be permitted to expand was welcome news after years of campaigning by the school. At one stage, Drumragh IC was at the centre of a judicial review against the Department of Education after an earlier development proposal was turned down. The DE has now permitted an increase in admissions of nine places each year – slightly fewer than the College had requested - with the sixth form provision also increasing from 100 to 120 students. The changes will begin from September this year and will eventually bring the overall enrolment at Drumragh IC from 580 to 645.

Excitement is building at Omagh Integrated Primary School which, along with its nursery and playgroup, will move into brand new premises next to Drumragh Integrated College this autumn. This will create an integrated campus for pupils from pre-school to A-level. The IEF is proud to be working alongside the Eithne and Paddy Fitzpatrick Memorial Fund to support the establishment of the new children's centre on the campus.

The schools have collaborated to produce a website and video, with support from the IEF, to showcase their exciting new partnership. You can see the promotional film and learn more about the new campus on the OIC website: www.omaghintegratedcampus.co.uk.

First steps to success guided by new partnership

Leading lights of tech business start-ups gave a master class to ambitious students from integrated colleges when the IEF Carson Awards Programme teamed up with Ormeau Baths Belfast and Young Enterprise NI (YENI) in a unique partnership.

Around 60 pupils from Blackwater, Priory and Strangford Integrated Colleges gathered at the Ormeau Baths on 21 March. The day was planned to trigger learning by taking the lesson out of the classroom. After hearing from Peter Edgar of Ignite, who told

them they could do anything they wished to do in life, the students faced a creative challenge and worked in teams with the support of volunteers from a number of the companies based at Ormeau Baths.

The master-class developed following conversations between two of NI's leading entrepreneurs - Mark Dowds (co-founder of Ormeau Baths) and Tony Carson, an investor who also established the IEF Carson Awards Programme with his late father, comedian Frank Carson.

Tony Carson said that he was glad to be supporting the event:

"It's great to be part of this initiative. The creative industries sector is definitely a growth area and it's vital to nurture and encourage young talent. I look forward to seeing these young people become part of Northern Ireland's success story."

Ormeau Baths' Mark Dowds added

"We exist to find and develop entrepreneurs who can shape the knowledge economy in NI. Partnering with Carson Awards and YENI we are developing a programme tailored to those who don't take the normal career path. Some of the brightest are more interested in business than books. We would like to help them."

As the day drew to a close, David Irvine from Blackwater IC in Downpatrick said:

"I've learnt so much and had fun at the same time; it was great to team up and make new friends...a day like today helps develop those important skills for whatever the future holds. There should be more days like this!"

The Fund would like to thank Tony, Mark, Young Enterprise NI and all those at the Ormeau Baths who contributed to the event, including Barclays Eagle Labs for providing lunch.



Brooke McFadden, Tom Houston and Kiera Carlson from Strangford IC get creative and learn some entrepreneurial skills at Ormeau Baths

Creative talent on show at Carson Awards celebration



(l-r) Dan Gordon, Tony Carson and Adrian Dunbar with New-Bridge IC pupils

The IEF was delighted that entrepreneur Tony Carson and actors Dan Gordon and Adrian Dunbar joined our celebration of the creative talents found in integrated schools.

Students, staff and supporters of integrated education gathered at New-Bridge Integrated

College last October for the annual Carson Awards showcase. The Carson Awards scheme was established by Tony and named in tribute to his father, the legendary Belfast comedian Frank Carson.

The awards are an exciting opportunity for young people to express themselves through

the arts, under the theme 'What Integrated Education Means to Me'. Prizes were presented for art projects of all types, and work completed by senior students under the Carson Bursary scheme was on display.

The proceedings were compered by Dan Gordon. Shimna Integrated College entertained with a live drama performance and New-Bridge IC student Alanna McCourt sang her winning composition, 'New Beginnings'. The audience was also entertained by extracts of videos entered into the competition and by an exhibition of winning art work.

Prize winners in the 2016-2017 Carson Awards were:

Key Stage One – Millennium IPS

Key Stage Two – Ballymoney Model CIPS

Key Stage Three Joint Winners – Drumragh IC and New-Bridge IC

Key Stage Four Joint Winners – Year 11 drama class, Shimna IC and Max Sproule, Year 12 New-Bridge IC

The Carson Bursary scheme for 2018 is now closed but entries for the Carson Prizes can be sent to the IEF until 25 May.

Class Acts in London show their support for the Fund



Wendy Wason

A high-profile line-up of comedy stars joined forces in Union Chapel, London, on 30 October last year to raise cash for the IEF. The 'Class Acts' show was hosted by comedian and actress Wendy Wason who also supported the IEF at the 'Stand Up for Integrated Education' night in Belfast in 2016.

The stars taking to the stage in London were Al Murray, Sara Pascoe, Carl Donnelly, Shane Todd, Aisling Bea and Jarlath Regan. After the comedy the audience enjoyed music from 'new tone Ska' band HeavyBall, who played an acoustic set.

Explaining why the event was so important to her, Wendy Wason said

"My husband is from Northern Ireland and is a supporter of integrated education. After attending a couple of IEF events with him I knew I wanted to do something to support their amazing work. Northern Ireland has made so much positive progress over recent years but we need to do what we can to support efforts to sustain and build on it. That's why I'm so pleased to do my bit for the IEF."

Plans are already well under way for the next IEF comedy night at the Ulster Hall on Thursday 27 September 2018.

Best foot forward for integration

We would like to encourage our friends and supporters to toe the line and participate in an 'Odd Socks' day where you wear different coloured socks and donate to the Integrated Education Fund.

Odd Socks days celebrate difference in a colourful, fun way whilst raising money to help our work.

Thanks go to the many schools that have already supported the campaign by arranging a day for pupils and teachers to come to school wearing odd socks in bright colours. Every participant pays one pound (or more if you like) which the school sends to the Integrated Education Fund.

Groups could hold an odd socks tea party, or sports teams could play one match in odd socks. We'd be delighted if companies could get involved too – perhaps for every one of your customers wearing odd socks you make a donation to the IEF. This is also a great way to raise awareness of your business whilst raising funds for integrated education.



Happy feet at Mill Strand IPS

Crumlin Integrated College set on future growth

Crumlin Integrated College has shared its vision of a successful future, launching a ten-point plan for a decade of growth.

Lynda McGarry, acting principal of Crumlin IC, welcomed Randox founder, Dr Peter FitzGerald, and Graham Keddle, Managing Director of Belfast International

Airport, to the school on 28 February to present the plan at a special assembly for students, politicians and the wider community.

The ambitious strategy includes a new building, provision for post-16 education and the school becoming a central hub for youth in the Crumlin area.

Mrs McGarry explained

“Crumlin Integrated College has experienced a challenging time. From formal intervention in 2010 we have turned the school around, and started to rebuild our college into an excellent, sustainable school that we’re all extremely proud of...we experienced our highest-ever intake and 86% of pupils achieved five or more A*-C grades in their GCSEs. So it’s the right time to focus on our future, and we are thrilled to launch our Decade of Growth plan, based on the sound foundations already begun.”

The Crumlin IC plan focuses on ten key areas, including ‘A Building for Growth’, ‘One Community’, ‘Future-proofing Career Pathways’ and ‘Beyond the School Day’.

One of the first developments is the installation of a state-of-the-art youth unit at the school, enhancing the College campus and offering a fantastic resource for young people in Crumlin.



Graham Keddle (BIA), Dr Peter FitzGerald (Randox), Crumlin IC acting principal Lynda McGarry and pupils launch the college’s ten-year vision

Irish American Partnership digs deep to help young gardeners at Cliftonville IPS

Children at Cliftonville Integrated Primary School will be taking some lessons out of the classroom thanks to generous support from the Irish American Partnership (IAP). A donation of \$10,000 will help the North Belfast school to develop an outdoor learning space and a gardening club which will also be used by parents and the wider community.

The gift was secured for the school by the Integrated Education Fund. Sir Bruce Robinson of the IAP joined Baroness May Blood, Campaign Chair of the IEF, to present a cheque to staff and pupils at Cliftonville IPS on 12 April.

Thanking the IAP and the IEF for their support, principal Bill Fletcher said

“This is a project which will not only enhance children’s learning and creative play, but will also promote outdoor activity. The plan is to bring families together at the school to learn about growing and cooking produce and to enjoy the outdoor environment.”

Sir Bruce commented

“The Partnership is very pleased to support such an innovative project, which will benefit the local community as well as pupils and their parents. It places the school even more firmly at the heart of this community.”

The gardening club will be supported by the school’s new Parent Teacher Association.



Pupils at Cliftonville IPS with (l-r) teacher Heather Verner, Baroness May Blood (IEF) and Sir Bruce Robinson (IAP)

Integrated education is outstanding!

The snowy weather at the start of March did not prevent Oakgrove Integrated College offering a warm welcome to visitors celebrating Integrated Education Month 2018. Representatives of NICIE, IEF and Integrated AlumNI gathered at the school in Derry/Londonderry to formally open events, which this year had the theme of “Everybody Outstanding”.

Integrated schools around Northern Ireland held their own celebrations during March. The NICIE Teachers’ Committee had produced a series of five challenges (with a guidance booklet) to help schools introduce the theme into their daily activities.



The Armagh Rhymers, one of Ireland’s oldest professional theatre groups came into Cranmore Integrated Primary School at the beginning of IE Month and did a workshop with the P4 class, who then joined in a performance for the rest of the school.



NICIE directors Eamon Quinn and Dr Helen McLaughlin proudly model their IE Month 2018 t-shirts with CEO Roisin Marshall



Glencraig Integrated Primary School in Hollywood celebrated IE month by taking pupils, parents and the wider school community on a learning journey around the world. International links were explored in a day devoted to cultural diversity.

Ulster Carpets’ charity supports Brownlow IC pupils

Young people at Brownlow Integrated College in Craigavon are to benefit from a targeted “Pupil and Parenting Programme” along with counselling support, thanks to help from the John Wilson Memorial Trust, which was set up by Ulster Carpets. The Trust was introduced to the school by the IEF.



(l-r) Caroline Somerville (John Wilson Memorial Trust), Caroline Whiteside (Ulster Carpets), with (seated) Joanne Thompson (Brownlow IC), Baroness May Blood and Brownlow IC students

Trustee Caroline Somerville and Ulster Carpets staff joined Baroness May Blood MBE (IEF Campaign Chair) at Brownlow IC on 22 March to hear more about the programme and to present a £20,000 donation to the college.

Brownlow IC provides a whole-school programme designed to support pupils both in school and at home and also offers individual help for students experiencing problems such as mental health issues, family upheaval or health concerns. The school will also use the donation to strengthen links

between school and home, with special father/son and mother/daughter events.

Stephen Creber, Principal of Brownlow IC, said

“This funding through the John Wilson Memorial Trust is a massive help; we have a waiting list of pupils needing advice and counselling. Very often, personal, social and emotional issues are huge barriers to learning. By tackling these barriers, we can encourage children to better themselves both personally and academically.”

Taoiseach learns about peace education at New-Bridge Integrated College

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar praised the “confident and ambitious” pupils at New-Bridge Integrated College in Loughbrickland when he visited the school on 30 April. The Taoiseach was keen to see how the College’s approach to integration throughout school life had earned it the Evens International Prize for Peace Education – the first school in the UK or Ireland to win the award. Last November representatives from the school travelled to London to receive the honorary title of ‘Laureate of Peace Education’.



Leo Varadkar was welcomed to the school by staff, pupils, governors and representatives of the IEF and NICIE. Principal of New-Bridge IC Anne Anderson said

“It is a great honour that Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has chosen to visit New-Bridge Integrated College in person to see our work in peace education.

We are very pleased to be able to show him the great work of our staff and students and to demonstrate how an openly diverse society can form a united community.”

After a brief performance by the school choir the Taoiseach toured the school and spoke to senior pupils, who discussed

their experiences of diversity and integration at New-Bridge IC.

Speaking as he left the school Leo Varadkar said

“I am very happy to congratulate New-Bridge Integrated College on winning the international Evens Peace Prize. Having met students and staff I can say the honour is

well-deserved; this school shows how diversity can be celebrated and nurtured in a positive educational environment. The students and teachers at the college are setting a great example, and I have no doubt that many of the confident and ambitious young people I met today will be leaders in their own right in the future.”

US Consul visits integrated schools

The community at Ballymoney Model Controlled Integrated Primary School was delighted to welcome a VIP on 18 December when Dan Lawton, US Consul General, visited. It was one of a series of visits Mr Lawton made to integrated primary schools last winter. He was a guest at celebrations for Drumlins Integrated Primary School’s new building in Ballynahinch in December and at the official opening of Killyleagh Integrated Primary School Nursery in January.

At Ballymoney Model CIPS, Mr Lawton was greeted with a special assembly which



Ballymoney Model CIPS council with US Consul-General Dan Lawton

included a presentation from P7 which outlined many different aspects of school life from study and sport, through friendships and clubs, to environmental protection.

The members of the school council then had a meeting with Mr Lawton and asked him about his work and his own schooldays. The Consul General presented the school with a range of books for the library.

Ballymoney Model Primary School was first established in 1856 and in 2009 it formally transformed to integrated status. It now has almost 400 pupils and incorporates a special centre offering support for children with speech and language difficulties.



The US Consul-General with young pupils at Killyleagh IPS

Hazelwood IC pupils welcome Cabinet minister

Pupils, staff and governors at Hazelwood Integrated College in North Belfast were proud to host the Rt Hon David Lidington MP, Minister for the Cabinet Office, when he toured the school during a visit to Belfast on 26 April.

Mr Lidington, a former Shadow Secretary of State for NI, was greeted at the College by Head Boy James Brown and Year 14 student, Rachel Fitzsimons, Principal Kathleen O'Hare, Trevor Parkhill, who is Chair of the Board of Governors, and Baroness May Blood, Campaign Chair of the Integrated Education Fund (IEF).

Welcoming Mr Lidington, Mrs O'Hare said

"Mr Lidington will witness the passion our students have for integrated education as they share their own personal stories with him. We will be impressing on him the need for government-sponsored programmes to support the growth of integrated education, as well as the particular needs of Hazelwood as an expanding college".

Baroness Blood commented

"It's a pleasure to welcome the minister and have the opportunity to show him how this school is promoting social, cultural and religious integration through the pursuit of education excellence."



Rt Hon David Lidington MP (centre) at Hazelwood IC with (l-r) James Brown, Kathleen O'Hare, Baroness May Blood and Rachel Fitzsimons

Mr Lidington toured the school and took every opportunity to talk with students.

The minister said

"It's been marvellous to see first-hand the benefits that integrated education

is bringing to young people in Northern Ireland. The staff and students of Hazelwood College can be proud of what they have created together. If these are typical of young people here, then the future is in safe hands."

MP sees integration in action at Hazelwood IPS

Hazelwood Integrated Primary School was delighted to welcome a special guest on 26 January, when the then Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Owen Smith MP, visited.

Mr Smith was greeted at the North Belfast school by pupils and the principal, Patricia Murtagh, along with NICE CEO Roisin Marshall and Baroness May Blood, Campaign Chair of the IEF. He also met Stuart Irwin, a past pupil of Hazelwood Integrated College and an active member of the Integrated AlumNI organisation.

After hearing the senior choir sing, and sitting in on a rehearsal for a special assembly on Fair Trade, the MP visited classrooms and chatted to the school council.

Patricia Murtagh said

"We are honoured and delighted to welcome Owen Smith MP and show him the work we do to prepare our diverse pupils for life as future citizens of a prosperous and peaceful Northern Ireland. The children did us proud today. I think they showed that Hazelwood IPS prepares children of all backgrounds, abilities and traditions for the next step in their education and also to play their part in building a united community."



Owen Smith MP with Baroness May Blood, school principal Patricia Murtagh and governor Drennan McBride with pupils at Hazelwood IPS.

Hazelwood IPS opened in 1985, thanks to a determined campaign by 16 local parents. Owen Smith heard that all integrated schools in Northern Ireland have been established based on parental support, whilst none has been initiated by the government.



Bridge IPS film buffs walk the red carpet

Film fans at Bridge Integrated Primary School in Banbridge headed to London in March as finalists in a glamorous awards ceremony run by Into Film. Although they did not win overall, Bridge IPS was named as one of the top three clubs in the under-12 section for UK Film Club of the Year.

The trip to the South Bank Centre in London was supported by the Carson Awards scheme, which is funded by the family of the late Frank Carson and run by the IEF.

The annual Into Film awards ceremony was hosted by TV and radio presenter Gemma Cairney. Into Film is the film education charity, engaging with more than half the schools

in the UK. Belfast-born Kenneth Branagh is one of the charity's ambassadors.

The Bridge IPS Film Club has been running for five years and is one of the most popular clubs in the school. The 36 members meet every week to watch and discuss movies and last year Bridge IPS became the first school in the UK to achieve Platinum Film Buff status from Into Film.

Club leader, teacher and Into Film NI ambassador, Paul Scowcroft said

"I am so proud to have Bridge IPS nominated for Film Club of the Year, because it validates our ethos of appreciating diversity and tolerance. Our members pride themselves in choosing a variety of movies and we are continually searching for stories that open our minds and broaden our horizons."

Thank you, fans



Thanks are due to our friends Stiff Little Fingers and their multitude of fans who have once again supported the Fund's work. Pictured are SLF bassist Ali McMordie (l) and Paul Collins of the IEF at the band's London gig on 23 March. Anyone on the guest list was asked to make a donation and there were additional collection buckets for fans to contribute - raising almost £750 for the IEF. The Stiffs have been so good to us over so many years and it is immensely appreciated.

Past pupils inspire today's students

The flourishing Integrated AlumNI group is reaching out to past and present pupils at integrated schools and last November the group launched a website to keep everyone up to date with their activities.



AlumNI Chair Treasa Harkin, web designer Paul McCrory and Hilary Copeland of the Belfast group launch the new website

More recently, through Integrated AlumNI's "Back to School" roadshow, sixth-form students at four integrated colleges have been enjoying workshops designed to build confidence as they prepare for the future beyond school.

Coinciding with the start of Integrated Education Month (March), the events included lively discussions about options for the future. There were also presentations on the network of contacts ready to help young people as they leave school and enter the world of further and higher education or work.

After the workshop at Ulidia IC, past pupil Shawn Wilkinson Clarke commented

"It's great to go back into school and meet current pupils who are making the same kinds of plans as we were not so long ago. Through our roadshow, we can share our experiences and offer reassurance that friendly help and support is available through the Integrated AlumNI groups."

Niamh Galwey, a past pupil of Brownlow Integrated College in Craigavon, added

"Often it's only once you have been out of school a while that you appreciate what a unique experience you were given through integrated education."

Integrated AlumNI is an association of former pupils who are keen to raise their voices to promote and campaign for integrated education. Through financial support from the IEF and the Belfast Trust for Integrated Education, there are now groups in Belfast, London, Liverpool and Edinburgh.

www.integratedalumni.org

Sperrin Integrated College wins Ulster rugby title

The 1st XV at Sperrin Integrated College won their first Under 18 High Schools Cup, beating Carndonagh Community School in the final on 10 January. A well-disciplined and clinical performance from the Magherafelt boys ensured a convincing 36-0 victory and saw them become Ulster Champions and school history-makers.

This win adds to the recent success that Sperrin IC have enjoyed in Gaelic football, with the team winning this year's Ulster schools' Oisín McGrath Cup.

Dominic Lynn, Head of PE at the college, feels that the recent surge in silverware at Ulster Level is a result of the approach taken to sport in Sperrin IC:

"We try to find the sport that appeals to each individual child so that they can develop a long term, healthy attitude towards exercise. We offer a range of activities such as Gaelic Football, Rugby, Camogie, Hockey, Soccer, Basketball, Volleyball, Badminton, Table Tennis, Athletics, Gymnastics, Dance, and Boxing. Most of our pupils will have tried each of these sports during their school life."



Sperrin IC: Ulster Champions



Scary stars!

Congratulations to Ballycastle IPS whose creepy creation, Scary Mary (left), won the Best Scarecrow award in the annual competition for integrated primary schools sponsored by Allianz. All scarecrows entered were displayed at Garden Show Ireland from 04 – 06 May and there was a fantastic response to the competition this year.

The Best Scarecrow winners of 2017, Corran IPS (pictured right), travelled with other winning schools to CAFRE (College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise) on 24 November last

year to be awarded saplings, and they also potted up window-boxes to take back to school with them.

The Fund is grateful to Allianz for their continuing support and to CAFRE Greenmount for generously supplying the prizes.



Dylan's personal best wins medals

Congratulations to Dylan Registe of Integrated College Dungannon, who represented ICD at the Irish Minor Schools' Swimming Championships at the National Aquatic Centre in Dublin.

After shining in the Ulster Schools Championships last October, where he won gold for the 50m freestyle and silver in the 50m butterfly, Dylan progressed to National level and took 2nd place silver medal in the 50m butterfly and 5th place in the 50m freestyle - against the best swimmers in Ireland in the age 11-12 boys' category. All Dylan's swims were completed in personal best times.



Integrated schools race to win

Congratulations to the Year 8 cross-country team from Integrated College Dungannon (ICD) who competed against the top runners from around NI to win the Ulster Schools' Mini Boys' Championship at Mallusk on 21 February. Running against 15 teams comprising 151 competitors, the ICD boys were led home by captain Ethan Nethery, who took 15th place and finished as victors with 84 points.

The young runners at Lough View Integrated Primary School in Castlereagh shone at the Flahavans Athletics NI Primary School Finals on the same day. The event featured the best three teams from each of the regional heats.

Lough View IPS boys finished first out of a field of 261 athletes and the girls took silver. Four of the school's runners – Finn Cross, Erin Cross, Isaac Deane-Guilfoyle and Elijah Rutherford - have been selected for the NI Youth development squad.



Twins Lucy and Ella Dunbar help secure the silver for Loughview IPS

Lagan College



Schools pledge to help make NI a welcoming place

Three integrated schools have hosted conferences to explore ways to combat racism and welcome newcomer students.

Between June 2016 and June 2017 there were more than a thousand racist incidents reported to the PSNI.

With the support of the IEF, NICIE and the Open Society Foundations, Lagan College and Cliftonville Integrated Primary School in Belfast and Oakgrove Integrated Primary School in Derry/Londonderry, invited pupils, staff and their wider local communities - including members of other schools - to consider and confront prejudice. The events, which are part of a series entitled "Communities in Dialogue", provide an opportunity for young people from newcomer and minority ethnic backgrounds to share their experiences of life in Northern Ireland.

Panels of community and political representatives at each event discussed the issues raised by the young people and the meetings ended with proposals for action to support pupils and their families with the process of integration. All participants were encouraged to record a personal pledge to help make Northern Ireland - and schools in particular - inclusive and welcoming.

Oakgrove IPS Principal, Ashley Donaghey, told the audience at her school's event that integrated education is about more than bringing different people into the same classrooms; it is about educating children about difference and respect and openly discussing contentious issues from a range of perspectives.



Oakgrove IPS

Please stay in touch!

New laws on data protection and confidentiality mean we need your permission to keep your contact details. If you get emails, e-zines or letters from us and you want to continue receiving news of our activities and events, then we will be contacting you to ask for your permission to hold your details on our database. **We need you to reply so we can keep in touch after 25 May when the new law comes into force.**